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  DAVID S. BURGESS
- Symposium: Commentary on the National Council's "Assumptions for Economic Life"
- Report on a Conversation: Niebuhr and de Pury
  ARNOLD W. HEARN
- Christian Faith and Political Decision
  ROBERT MCAFEE BROWN

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CHRISTIANITY and SOCIETY

EDITORIALS

Liberalism and Conservatism

The publication of Russell Kirk's second book, *The Conservative Mind* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), has renewed the controversy about conservatism and liberalism. Definitions are rather arbitrary, but this controversy could be settled by a few precise definitions. Traditional liberalism had a passion for justice but also a blindness to the factors of interest and power in any social situation, as well as a belief that equality and liberty are simple possibilities of communal organization. [The fact is, however, that different functions and grades of authority make absolute equality impossible in any society, while the necessities of social order and peace make absolute liberty an impossibility.] The average liberal is not an anarchist, but he inclines to be libertarian and equalitarian in an uncritical way.

On the other hand, traditional conservatism not only possesses the virtue of understanding the inevitability of social hierarchies, the necessity of coercion in establishing social order, and the necessity of dealing with the factors of interest and power; it also tends to express an uncritical devotion to any existent *status quo* with its contingent balances of power, its social inequalities, and its forms of relative justice. But any given *status quo* must be critically surveyed by realistic liberalism; otherwise, differences of privilege may be considered *a priori,* thus exceeding what are actually differences only of function. Likewise, without this critical surveillance, the coercive elements in the community may tend to imperil the liberty of persons—which liberty is necessary above and beyond the demands of the community in order for man to be truly human.

The confusions arise not because realistic liberals fail to be uncritical of the moral defects in any *status quo,* whether feudal or capitalistic, but because scholars, like Russell Kirk, who have discovered the realism of an Edmund Burke always tend to mix this realism with an uncritical acceptance of inequality, conformity, and the current balance or equilibrium of power in any social scene.

It is not surprising that the traditional conservatives should have mixed their wisdom in understanding the perennial factors in a communal existence with their devotion to a traditional social order, however defective in social justice. But it is a little surprising that a modern "conservative" should think it possible and necessary to reconstruct a traditional order and to bless its inequalities as necessary.

It is also a little baffling that the traditional "liberals" when confronted with political realism, more particularly with the realism drawn from the Christian estimate of the perennial character of human sin, should be frightened into the conviction that this realism must be an ally of conservatism. They seem to insist that it is necessary to have illusions about human nature in order to be a good apostle of liberty, equality, and justice. They illogically assume that if the proponent of justice snatches from the hand of conservatism a weapon which has hitherto been used almost exclusively on the other side of the battle, that the sword snatcher has gone over to the enemy. In fact he has only availed himself of a weapon which has been historically too exclusively in the hands of the opponents of justice.

It may be worth noting that the gradations of authority which traditional liberalism tends to overlook are obvious in every church, and even in every labor organization. Without these gradations there could be no community. But it is significant that

in both churches and labor unions these grades of authority usually are accompanied by inequalities of privilege which probably exceed any sensitive moral norm. Thus the corruption of sin perpetually accentuates the perennial necessities of our social existence. Is there any virtue in being blind to these facts?

R. N.

The State of the Union

The President's State of the Union message to Congress at the beginning of the new congressional session was well received throughout the world because it revealed what must now be regarded as Eisenhower's firm commitment to the patient but hard task of coexistence. This position is maintained against his own intransigeant right wing and is supported by the Democratic majority in Congress. The only apprehensions expressed in Europe were in regard to the reduction of our ground forces, obviously dictated by budgetary considerations and hardly consistent with the President's realistic appraisal of the dangers which we still confront. Europe is afraid that this policy means that in case of possible conflict it will have to furnish the "blood" while we furnish atomic weapons.

On the whole, life in a fairly healthy democracy such as ours is full of surprises and reassurances in times like this. Here is the President, who in the heat of the campaign asked the nation not to subject him to the "cold war" of a Democratic Congress, getting along amiably with that Congress. It will probably revoke the Dixon-Yates contract and thus set back the worst part of Republican policy, namely its attitude toward issues of public power. It will certainly relieve our situation with our allies by giving the President more reciprocal trade agreements than he wanted even though he wanted considerably more than his own party would grant. We had coined the slogan, "trade not aid," but our allies believed in it more than the Republican party.

The President's social security program is taken from the "New Deal," as the Democrats in Congress have not been slow to point out. But the nation has a clear gain when an opposition party adopts a program originally controversial and adventurous. One could make cynical observations about the evaporation of the promises for a balanced budget and tax reduction in the President's program. But one cannot be cynical about the fact that the responsibilities of office dissipate many campaign promises—that is, when it is in the public interest that they be revoked.

Obviously the President is still more popular than his party. His party has certainly failed to gain a majority of the electorate. But Eisenhower is so popular that he may possibly be able to rescue the party a second time in the next election. The fact that he is the only one who could win makes his candidacy a virtual certainty despite his rumored disinclinations to run.

The reasons for his continued popularity do both him and the nation credit. After months of vacillation in dealing with his right wing, he has left the nation and the world in no doubt that he wants peace, and he regards a possible atomic war as catastrophic. Despite the fears of the world about our heedlessness, there is no doubt that the American people favor the President's attitude as against the policies of some of his advisors who have tried to give vigor to our foreign policy by advertising slogans and hazardous policies of "liberation" or "massive retaliation." If the American fliers are released by the Chinese it will be chiefly because Mr. Hammerskjold has been able to convince Chou-En-lai that it is in the interest of world peace to strengthen the President's position rather than the policy of the McCarthy-Knowland faction. Thus we walk warily on the precipice of an atomic catastrophe with providential factors rather than our own wisdom saving us from disaster. One of these providential factors is the coincidence between the moral and political instincts of a President, who has not otherwise proved himself to be too shrewd, and the moral instincts of the common people.

R. N.

Portents in Japan

It is not possible for a foreigner to follow all the intricacies of Japanese politics which led to the defeat of the "liberal" Yoshida government, to the probable disintegration of the Liberal Party which has ruled Japan since the war, and to the ascension to power of the new prime minister, Hatoyama. But there is a clear line in these developments which must impress our nation even if we do not understand the intricacies. That is that the new government, though ostensibly anti-communist and devoted to the Western democratic alliance, is determined to establish more trade with Communist China. This policy seems to be the only significant difference between the old and the new government.

For our nation this emphasis upon trade with the Communist world is part of the general pattern of impatience among our allies with our insistence upon trade restrictions against the Soviet bloc. In Japan the impatience is rather more marked because Japan is an industrial nation which must trade and sell its industrial goods to live and for which China has been the traditional "hinterland" and market. The Japanese economy has not been healthy since the end of the Korean war robbed it of the special markets which it enjoyed after the close of the World War. Naturally the Japanese turn longing eyes to the Chinese markets. Of course there is a certain peril in trade with China. A too exclusive trade may place Japan in the economic power of China. But the prohibition of trade, particularly by the Western power which was the victor over Japan in the recent war, is bound to fan every flame of anti-Americanism. The anti-Americanism of Japan is not at the present time excessive. It is merely typical. But the fact that Japan desperately needs trade and that we are inclined to restrict trade with the Communist world as much as possible serves to make the Japanese reactions to America particularly important.

Developments in Japan are intrinsically important, but they are even more important in revealing that the chief task of American statesmanship in the long "competitive coexistence" with communism is not so much courage and vigor but a wise and circumspect consideration of the needs and points of friction with our allies in both Europe and Asia. The victory of democracy must depend ultimately upon the strength, the unity, and the economic and political health of the vast alliance of free nations of which we are the leaders, not by any inherent right or by dint of any special virtue, but by the providence of God and through our economic strength.

R. N.

Open Letter to the President

Christian Action, a national, unofficial, interdenominational fellowship of Protestants interested in public policy from the viewpoint of the Christian faith, wishes to commend the position taken in your recent State of the Union message with respect to our existing immigration laws. We agree that certain provisions of the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act "have the effect of compelling action in respect to aliens which is inequitable in some instances and discriminatory in others." We agree that these provisions should be corrected in this session of the Congress.

We call upon you to continue your interest in this matter, and to press for its serious consideration. We believe that hearings in the House and Senate will make very convincing the need for legislative changes. Congressmen of both major parties have already indicated their realization of the desirability of changes in our present laws. We hope you will continue to take initiative in this important matter, which has serious implications for both our domestic welfare and our foreign policy.

We believe that our immigration policies should conform more closely to America's great tradition of concern for the dignity of the individual and equality for all men under the law. The portions of our current legislations which do not reflect these principles need revision, and we encourage your further action in this just and necessary effort.

R. T. H.

Eisenhower and the Security Program

The tendency among us to praise President Eisenhower for his sound intuition and his courage in defending his position on foreign policy should not blind us to some of his weaknesses which have been much emphasized in the past and are still present. One example of them is his dealing with the security program. His press conference on the case of Wolf Ladejinsky revealed the Eisenhower who does not seem to know much about what is happening. When it was announced that Stassen had taken on Ladejinsky for work in Indo-China in spite of Mr. Benson's rejection of him, it appeared that a real change might be taking place with the President's full support.

But at his press conference he revealed that he had lost touch with the situation and that Stassen had acted on his own authority without any support from the President. In the course of his comments the President talked as though he had no awareness of the issues involved. He said that the security program "had been made by humans, and it was bound to have its imperfections." That is one of the more remarkable understatements of this period. This program was made by humans who were suffering from an obsession which is a real danger to both security and freedom. T. R. B. in *The New Republic* has some good comments on the difference between the defenders of this program who happen to be very pious men and the somewhat less pious newsmen who had much to do with uncovering the injustices in the program. He says, "Sometimes we wonder idly who makes the better guardian of this sacred human dignity: a well-meaning Administration which is willing to pillory a defenseless civil servant (or else perhaps snatch him off the faggots for a new position of high trust without even an apology) —or a bunch of earthy reporters, who do not practice too much church-going, but who have an urgent sense of decency about giving a guy a fair shake." He had been describing the pressure of the reporters on Secretary Benson at a recent press conference. More and more in recent years we can be grateful for the courage and independence of reporters—often in contrast to publishers.

J. C. B.

No Marshall Plan For Asia

A few months ago there was hope that the President would present to Congress a bold new program of economic aid to the economically under-developed countries in Asia. It seemed that several departments of the Administration had become convinced that there should now be a shift of emphasis from military defense against Communism in Asia to an effort to help threatened countries to develop antidotes to Communist propaganda, conspiracy, and revolution. The military power which has been developed in the non-Communist world has helped to create the situation in which military attack is no longer greatly to be feared.

Now it seems that Secretary Humphrey has been able to veto this projected program because of the drain on the treasury. If this is the case, it may turn out to be a most ironical form of false economy. If many more nations do lose their freedom in the next few years, we shall probably have to spend more on military preparations because the threat to us will seem greater. Non-military efforts, whether they be social or economic or ideological, are usually less expensive than military preparations, the cost of which seems almost bottomless. But the more important point now is that bombs are powerless against the particular pattern of Communist revolution within a country which is the real threat. Economic aid is not guaranteed to succeed either but at least it is relevant to the problem. There are many aspects of the problem—moral, spiritual, and political—as well as economic. If we seem to emphasize the economic it is not because that is the most fundamental but because it is the most tangible and the point at which this country can probably do most. Certainly if any nation, burdened by general poverty, sees no hope of economic better-

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Liberalism Revisited

DAVID S. BURGESS

We were called the "Irresponsibles," the second "Lost Generation," and we let it pass. Yet we, the college generation of the late 1930's, will leave behind us more evidence of having found ways to the good and beautiful life than any other generation in recent history. We were, and we are, vastly different in our attitudes than the present crop of young men and women. And that's cause for considerable worry.

My pessimism stems from the conviction that young Americans are becoming increasingly addicted to playing it safe, and that the college generation of today, which never knew the Depression, is not only conservative but singularly devoid of the idealism which, for better or worse, characterized the collegians of my age. Today's youth is neither flaming nor radical. He is old before his time.

Born during World War I, I remember the faces of the jobless in the soup lines of Hoover's days, the silhouettes of hungry men riding the freights into California, the triumphant smile of my father when he was fired from his teaching position for being too closely associated with "them bums and damned reliefers." In such times Roosevelt was my Messiah; he gave hope to the forlorn and lifted up above the ugliness of our mammon-worshipping society certain ethical standards to which I gave my wholehearted and often uncritical allegiance. My political philosophy, if it could be honored by such a name, was a simple one. I aimed to uplift the underdog—the Negro on the Mississippi plantation, the steelworker in Pittsburgh, the Okie thumbing it on Highway 66. This innate sympathy, born out of the common crisis of the Depression, affected my voting habits and in subtle ways determined my future vocational choices. Without fully understanding the pitfalls of institutionalized Big Government, I had a fiery faith in what the Republicans now mockingly call the "welfare state." My faith seemed justified by facts. My friends had been on WPA rolls, had attended CCC camps, had struggled through college with the aid of NYA scholarships. And when I saw with my own eyes that farmers were regaining their land, that workers were finding the meaning of self-respect, and that a nation was getting back on its feet, I rejoiced. For I felt deep in my heart that as a member of a new and rising generation I was part of a liberal movement whose heritage could be traced back to Jefferson, Paine, Jackson, Lincoln, Debs, Wilson, and finally Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Then came World War II. The reformism of the New Deal was shelved and almost forgotten. For the first time in my life, the State was transformed from a benevolent welfare agency into a huge war machine. Because of my generation's natural and inherited revulsion to war, we were immediately labeled "The Irresponsibles" by Archibald McLeish—"refugees from consequences, and exiles from responsibilities of moral choice."[1] My generation shrugged off these groundless charges and went to war. We fought well and came home to pick up where we had left off, hoping to find some useful calling and some worthy causes.

But like all war generations before us, we discovered that during our sojourn abroad, the threads of our past had been rudely broken. America had changed. It had become more powerful, more materialistic and superficially satisfied. Contrary to dire predictions there was no post-war depression. Wages remained high and employment relatively plentiful. Under such conditions some of us went to work immediately. Others went back to college, but there we felt quite aloof from the young fledglings fresh out of high school and ignorant of the facts of war. Today most of us are married and settled down. Children

1. Goldman, Eric F., *Rendezvous with Destiny,* Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1952, p. 389.

are being born into our homes. Many of us are now substantial community leaders, and within a few years we will all be called "middle-aged."

But as we grow older, something troubles us deeply. My generation had its hopes and dreams. Some were false, but at least we were dreamers living by a faith. Yet today, from the colleges and universities of America, is emerging a new generation largely without dreams, without faith, and without Jeremiah's burning desire "to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

The story of this generation is different from ours. The college students of 1955 were born during the Depression or shortly thereafter. During most of their lives, America has been at war or in preparation for war. These factors have created a booming war economy of high wages, full employment, and a constant inflationary spiral. To most of these youngsters living amidst prosperity, therefore, the Depression was only a fitful nightmare still plaguing the old folks. Most of their parents, by dint of luck or hard work, had risen from the poverty of the urban slums to the comfortable life of the American suburbs. Their children are now children of Suburbia, U.S.A., whose thinking and habits are throwbacks to those of Mr. Babbitt. Their children enter college and four years later corporations bid for the privilege of hiring them for $5,000 or $6,000 a year.

Hanging over this happy land, however, are the dark shadows of the draft, the Korean interval, and The Bomb. These threats merely add a dialectical note of fatalism to the otherwise optimistic philosophy of this generation whose members seemingly believe that the Depression never happened, that prosperity is eternal, and that opportunities for the aggressive young collegian with the right connections are infinite.

To label this present college generation as conservative would be an understatement. For in the colleges of 1955 the campus radical of my day is practically extinct. He has been replaced by Mr. Buckley of Yale and others anxious to "return to fundamentals." Between these two extremes is the great mass of today's students—conforming in order to be acceptable, keeping silent on all controversial questions, and following blindly the cult of leadership typified by the young executives on Ike's "New Team" in Washington. Upon graduation, the typical young male enters the world a fatalist and a conformist seeing no reason to stick out his neck. He is quickly welcomed into the ranks of the stodgy and is swallowed up by the station-wagon set. He acquires an attractive wife, and the happy couple, barring a sudden draft call, settles down to the routine of comfortable suburban living.

As these newcomers swell the ranks of the Right, the liberal movement of America —in political parties, the professions, and the causes of worthiness—is suffering. Recruits are pitifully few, and the young who join often lack vision and enthusiasm.

In such a crisis among the ranks of those of us who still dare to call ourselves liberal, it is easy to become angry with the young and to despair over their wanderings from our chosen path. This attitude of anger and despair, in fact, has been the perennial reaction of every generation hardened by adversity toward succeeding generations whose members are seemingly on Easy Street.

Yet the causes for liberalism's current disfavor among the young and in the nation as a whole can be attributed in part to the errors of my own generation. Our failures can be traced perhaps to the fact that we of the New Deal heritage are still motivated by our old and convenient stereotypes—the bloated capitalist, the exploited worker, the selfless public servant. Or possibly our errors come in part from our naive faith that somehow the Federal Government will always be the protector of the weak against the strong. But today the world has moved along. Our old stereotypes may prevent us from facing reality, and our unqualified faith in the Federal Government, born and developed during the thirties and forties, may only have a limited validity in current society. Under these circumstances, therefore, it seems quite necessary that we of the Depression and World War II generation re-examine both our stereotypes and our basic philosophy. Only then can we set our own house in

order and in good conscience invite the newcomers into our fellowship.

First, let us admit that our sympathy for the underdog, our desire to aid the weak and curb the strong, is the legitimate aim of genuine liberalism in every generation. But who is the underdog of today? Twenty years ago, it was the worker in mass production industries; he was underpaid, exploited and alone. In 1955, however, with the important exception of the South where the feudalistic pattern of paternalism still prevails, the industrial worker is no longer the underdog; he is moderately paid, labors under improved conditions, and usually is a member of a strong union.

It is plain that the underdog of today no longer fits into this single and tidy category. Today his numbers are legion—on the farm, in the towns and larger cities. The agricultural migrants of the West Coast, the Texas to Michigan or Florida to New York routes are becoming more numerous; they are America's rural proletariat, neglected by local, state, and national authorities, and without benefit of organization. There are the small farmers, the sharecroppers and day laborers who are being forced off of the land by the machines. And since the U.S. Department of Agriculture is now dominated by corporation farmers, by the processors, and by a Secretary who has little or no sympathy for the marginal or "unproductive" farmer, salvation for these forgotten Americans will not come from Washington. It must come from those who care, the liberals of our nation.

In the towns and cities lives another neglected group—the aged. Dr. Townsend championed their cause. With fixed incomes and a mere pittance in the form of social security payments they are too often the first victims of inflation and the easy prey of demagogues. Recently Congress has given them only a slight increase in benefits but meanwhile the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are still promulgating plans to weaken the whole social security program under the guise of giving pensions to all the aged.

Similar is the plight of the clerk, the stenographer, and the white collar worker. They are not organized. They receive low wages, labor long hours, and frequently are prevented from joining a union by their fictitious belief that somehow they are superior to industrial workers. To this list of current underdogs must be added the rural Negro of the South, the textile worker of Dixie, the five-and-ten-cent store girls, and the millions of yet unorganized service employees. Most of them are exploited, unrepresented, and largely forgotten. All are men and women for whose continued welfare and advancement every concerned liberal must be laboring.

Yet, even if our stereotype of the mythical industrial worker as the underdog is replaced by a more realistic list of the groups mentioned above, we liberals of my generation will suffer from the sentimental belief that permanent good for the forgotten can come out of a society such as ours which is dedicated to profit and largely controlled by a handful of manufacturing and banking interests. The Muckrakers of fifty years ago were sentimental too, and they failed chiefly because they refused to come to grips with reality. John Chamberlin in his book, *Farewell to Reform,* summarizes their failure in these words:

> The implication of Mr. Lincoln Steffens' confession is that his generation tried valiantly, throughout a fifteen-year quest for social justice, to understand plutocratic, industrial, monopolistic America by means of Jeffersonian, agrarian, individualistic, shibboleths. It was like trying to stem the tides. The answer to monopoly was "trust-busting"; the answer to corrupt government was "throw out the rascals"; the answer to banking and business oligarchy by a few men was Woodrow Wilson's "New Freedom" for the small business man.[2]

This type of sentimental moralism did not strike at the central problem of monopoly, or as Dr. William Archer, a British economist, commented at the time of the Muckrakers' Crusade:

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2. Chamberlin, John, *Farewell to Reform,* Liveright, Inc., New York, 1932, p. 77.

> The logical weakness of their position lies in an insufficient thinking out of the fundamental ideals on which the crusade is based. They do not see that most of the evils they attacked were inevitable results of a national creed of individualism. They lack either the insight or the courage to admit that some form of collectivism is the only permanent check upon the enslavement of the people by the most amazing plutocracy the world has ever known.[3]

Today, as in the Muckrakers' heyday, we are living in an economy dominated by giant banking trusts, and under an Administration which is fast becoming the tool of these interests. Trust-busting in the conventional form is now obsolete and almost impossible. Federal regulatory commissions, originally established to protect the consumer and aid the little business man, have already been packed with the representatives and friends of the very corporations supposedly marked for regulation. And the State, under the Eisenhower Administration, is slowly reverting to the pattern of the 1870's and the 1880's when it was "the fulcrum which the strong employed for their own uses in lifting the public domain, the public utility franchises, the mineral deposits, the rights of way, into their capacious pockets."[4]

Essentially, as my generation has discovered after two years of the Republicanism of Wilson, Humphrey, and Weeks, the magnates of banking and manufacturing who make the decisions and set the policies for the whole American business community, have little or no desire to broaden the base of political and economic power in our nation. They are fundamentally afraid of the people. And with the aid of the press and the boiled-shirted McCarthys of the Party, most Republicans persist in labeling as communist or fellow traveler practically every proven liberal of our nation.

Amidst such attacks upon personal liberties and reputations, amidst the raids on the public treasury in Washington and the public domain in every state, the members of my generation are somewhat belatedly sounding the alarm. We are driven by the conviction that, despite our past mistakes and blindnesses, little good can come out of an administration run by those whom we have had to fight on the picket line, across the bargaining table, and at the ballot box. Our experience teaches us that Big Government in the hands of the people is the only instrument which can save the nation from domination of the privileged. Such a government must build more, not less, TVA's. It must provide for the aged, the crippled, the downtrodden. But such a government cannot be realized without a preliminary program of public education by committed liberals—without proper efforts to combat the control of the one-party press, the corporation-run television and radio syndicates.

Today the power of the ruling oligarchy, whose representatives sit on the President's cabinet, stretches beyond the shores of America into the whole world. Anxious for profit, American business interests, under the guise of fighting communism, have too often persuaded our government to back with money and guns practically every colonial power and native right-wing regime. In the meantime, in our global struggle against totalitarianism of any form, we liberals, unknowingly perhaps, are too often identified with our nation's attempts to block the prime revolutionary forces of Africa and Asia. Somehow, to save ourselves and our nation, we must extricate ourselves from this false identification with what we oppose, and show to the rest of the world as Wendell Willkie, Chester Bowles, and more recently Adlai Stevenson have shown, that the principles of the Declaration of Independence are as applicable to the darker people of the world as they are to our nation. In fact, in the immediate years ahead, with the avenues of domestic reform seemingly blocked by public indifference and executive opposition, we liberals may find that foreign policy—the revival of Point 4, the building of international TVAs, or the application of the Reuther Plan to Africa and Asia, for example—is the most

3. Ibid., p. 142.
4. Ibid., p. 205.

productive arena for our efforts.

Our failures as liberals abroad have been often paralleled by our failures at home. In recent years we have let the word *reform* capture our imaginations. But all too often we have not taken the trouble to differentiate between the genuine reforms arising from the felt needs of the people and the synthetic reform movements financed by those who would corrupt our legislators and purchase our public officials. A few, but fortunately not many, of my generation were captured by Ike's Crusade, by his appeals for a religious revival and his condemnations of deep freezers and mink coats, when in reality Big Business had not only captured his Crusade, but in its wake were electing a few Senators and several Congressmen parading as would-be reformers.

Now that the Crusader is in the White House and a great number of business-financed reformers have ridden his coattails into elected public offices, we have seen the Federal Government transformed from an agency devoted to the common good into a giant colossus operated by men who quite sincerely believe that the welfare of the privileged few should be their major concern. This transformation, which has not yet been completed, has given us pause; for the members of my generation are beginning to wonder if our faith in the innate goodness of the Federal Government was too unqualified. Having questioned one major premise of our philosophy, we immediately recall some other past mistakes. Possibly, in our anxiety to get immediate and tangible results in the New Deal's heydey, we too often by-passed local, state, and city governments. We placed perhaps too little emphasis upon decentralization of authority, upon the taking of responsibility by the lower echelons of government. Today we have learned, to our sorrow, that we can no longer neglect the state legislatures. For here in past years, while the liberals had their attention fixed upon Washington, corporations had too often bribed and bought to the detriment of the people. We had placed our faith in Big Government in Washington, but now we are discovering that Big Government, necessary as it is in our complex society, is a two-edged sword. In the hands of the people it can do good. In the hands of the privileged it can do great harm to the public interest.

Our inordinate faith in Big Government on the Potomac may have sprung from our little faith in the smaller enterprises of human endeavor—in struggling farm cooperatives, in model self-sufficient communities, in decentralization of industry, in the cells and study groups which in England laid the solid foundation for the eventual building of the Labor Party. We were, in the main, worshippers of the Big Operation. We didn't care, in the words of William James, for the "tender rootlets." That is perhaps the reason why we didn't build from the bottom in the hurried years of the thirties and the forties. That is why we spent so little time philosophizing and planning, examining and re-examining our motives, evaluating and re-evaluating our philosophy, before we acted.

Today, when intellectuals are scorned and the Republican Party spits upon "eggheads," the members of my generation, with all of our faults, have no desire to run away and hide, or to lose ourselves in some petty, second-rate cause. We have learned the hard way that bigness in government, in the party, or even in the most altruistic movement leaves little of lasting importance unless it is undergirded by men and women who think, who have the uncommon ability to criticize themselves and their causes, who put their primary emphasis not upon the worldly success of any movement but upon the welfare of individual human beings.

In the midst of our present wonderings, discouragements and heartbreaks, my generation knows that there is a crying need for a new and motivating faith from which will flow a set of ethical standards applicable to the complex world of modern man. We live in the hope that within our lifetime a new political faith of liberalism may once again course through our land.

In the 1954 general election, those of my generation saw signs that this faith was revivable in America. A great majority of the voters heeded our warnings against Republican raids on the public treasury and

the public domain. They registered their support of T.V.A. and public power, and they showed their dissatisfaction with the Administration's neglect of the unemployed worker and the distressed farmer. They turned their backs upon the smearers and slanderers, and the total result was that the Democrats gained control of the House and the Senate, and that within the ranks of the Republicans the chasm between responsible conservatives and the irresponsible demagogues has been made wider. The armour of the White House crusader has been tarnished by the tactics of his cabal, and the days are numbered when the golfing and smiling President can front with success for a group of business executives who run and finance the Administration.

Despite the victories of the better factions within both parties, however, southern conservatives of the Democratic Party will control the House and the Senate, and the major Democratic aspirants for the 1956 nomination, who are presently on the scene, have not yet shown that there are important differences between the two parties. And under these circumstances, the true liberal of 1956 may find himself without a political party to which he can give his wholehearted allegiance.

Whatever 1956 or 1960 or the years to come may bring, however, it is the duty of the genuine liberal of every generation to be concerned about the passing fortunes of political factions and the failures of those who pose as liberators. He cannot be content pointing out the obvious sins of our time but must struggle against ignorance, hatred, fear and exploitation in all forms.

Several years ago Dr. Edward Ross, in his book entitled *An Analysis of Latter-Day Iniquity,* criticized the ethical shallowness of many who professed the liberal faith. These words perhaps seem to have a rather plain application to the moral dullness and half-heartedness of many of us who presently travel under the liberal banner. He wrote of liberals:

> They do not see that blackmail is piracy; that embezzlement is theft; that tax dodging is larcency; that railroad discrimination is treachery; that factory labor of children is slavery; that deleterious adulteration is murder. It has not come home to them that fraudulent promoters "devour widows' houses," that monopolists "grind the faces of the poor," that mercenary editors "put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." The cloven hoof hides in patent leather; and today, as in Hosea's time, "the people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."[5]

Only the religiously and ethically conscious can properly evaluate the policies of our America, the richest nation of all the world. Only they can lay the foundations for a new and needed liberal movement in America which has its roots in the heritage of Jefferson, Paine, Jackson, Lincoln, Debs, Wilson, and Roosevelt. And upon these foundations the young, the old, and the middle-aged can build together.

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5. Ibid., p. 383.

(continued from page 6)

ment apart from Communism it is sure to be vulnerable. Even the spiritual appeal of Communism as a substitute for religion in the case of the initiated Communists depends in part upon the apparent relevance of Communism, as interpretation and as program, to the economic needs of a nation.

Our interest in a more imaginative program of economic aid should not depend primarily on its usefulness in dealing with Communism. If there were no such thing as Communism it would still be right, though the chances of getting enough support for it in this country would be slight. American Christians should realize that, while there are technical limits to the amount of our wealth which can be shared directly and with good effect with less favored nations, it is our obligation to find every way possible to share up to those limits. Also we should avoid using imagined limits as an excuse for doing as little as possible. After we have done all that there is any political or technical possibility of our doing, it is likely that we shall find that it was really to our interest to do it. It is all that much mixed.

J. C. B.

Symposium: Commentary on the National Council's "Assumptions for Economic Life"

Introduction

John C. Bennett

We are presenting a symposium concerning the recent statement of the National Council of Churches entitled "Basic Principles and Assumptions for Economic Life."[1] This statement was adopted by the General Board of the National Council of Churches on September 15, 1954. It grew out of years of discussion by the very representative Department of the Church and Economic Life. It is the most important corporate statement that has been made on economic questions by American Christians in two decades. The final adoption of the statement represents a landmark in the development of the National Council of Churches because for more than a year it was vigorously opposed by an organized group of laymen in the National Council headed by Mr. J. Howard Pew. When the final vote came, the opponents of the statement could muster no more than six votes. The National Council seemed to many people to be too cautious in postponing action on the statement from meeting to meeting, but now that it has been adopted it should help to give greater confidence to the National Council in dealing with this subject. The one point for criticism in connection with the process is that most of the changes which were made in the statement during this long period of postponement were made in one direction in the hope of satisfying one very unrepresentative group of conservative laymen. I do not think that on the main issues there was any surrender to the opponents, but the statement lost some of its edge. This is especially true of what it says about equality.

We asked Dean Muelder to write because he was expected to be critical of this loss of edge. We asked two historians, Dean C. Howard Hopkins and Professor Robert T. Handy, who are authorities on the social teachings of American Protestantism to compare this statement with the famous "social creed" of the churches which was given its final form in 1932. Both of these writers indicate that the statement stands up surprisingly well. We also asked Charles C. West, who has often written with remarkable insight about conditions in China and East Germany, to say how this statement would appear to Christians in Europe.

I. Compared to the Social Creed

C. Howard Hopkins

What might be called the classic "social creed" was that adopted by the Federal Council at its organizing meeting in 1908. Presented by a commission on "The Church and Modern Industry," this statement was largely concerned with one segment of economics, as its title suggested. Its goals were specific abolition of child labor, "regulation of the conditions of toil for women," suppression of the "sweating system," as well as basic "equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life," "the right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance."

Supplemented and revised quadrennially, the "social creed" was substantially restated in 1932 at the depth of the depression. The 1932 revision was prepared by a group numbering among its members some of the original authors. They were impressed by the "encroachment of crude and cheap materialistic standards on our cultural and spiritual life," by lawlessness, violence, and the current threats to the home and family life. They devoted several thousand words to economic and industrial relations, the rural problem, marriage and the home, race and international relations, and methodolo-

1. Available for $.10 from the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.

gy. A new "social creed" set forth the previously emphasized concepts of social justice in a larger and more complex framework that included new issues not mentioned in 1908 and 1912: social planning, control of credit and monetary systems and the economic process "for the common good," "subordination of speculation and the profit motive to the creative and cooperative spirit," social insurance, the protection of employees and employers in the right of collective bargaining, economic justice for the farmer, "application of the Christian principle of redemption to the treatment of offenders," "justice, opportunity and equal rights for all" with "mutual goodwill and cooperation among social, economic, and religious groups," the repudiation of war, American participation in "international agencies for the peaceable settlement of all controversies," and a fresh concern for "free speech, free assembly, and a free press." To effectuate these the Quadrennial Council of 1932 called for a "new age of faith."

It was aware that the economic system was breaking down, as evidenced by depression and unemployment, and the "shocking inequalities of income" everywhere apparent. To meet these weaknesses "the Christian ideal" called for "hearty support of a planned economic system" in which "maximum social values" should be sought, on the assumption that "the personalities of human beings are of more value than their labor power." This demanded "a vigorous educational program" together with cooperation by the churches "with every sincere attempt of forward-looking pioneers to build a better order"; they should themselves help to inspire it. The statement recognized the "fundamentally international" nature of the economic order and warned against economic isolationism.

The 1932 Quadrennial faced industry with the responsibility of bearing the costs of "the problems which it creates"—unemployment, occupational disease, and other forms of insecurity. Industrial democracy was compared to political and various means of approaching it suggested.

It may readily be seen that the National Council's 1954 statement stands directly in the tradition sketched above. In the spirit of the deeper theological awareness of the present it devotes more attention to the prophetic role of the church, to the function of self-criticism, and to the basic religious and ethical assumptions with which earlier pronouncements often failed to undergird their proposals. The phrases used in 1954 to describe the broadened meaning of stewardship differ only in terminology from the social gospel of the 1880's; love of neighbor and the essential dignity of persons were social gospel foundations many years before the formation of the Federal Council. Concepts expressed in such phrases as "the whole man," "right relations," "community," were stated in the language of their own day by Washington Gladden and his contemporaries.

In certain areas the 1954 statement moves out into what might be called new territory. Its concern for freedom is a much stronger one than that of 1932. Its caution concerning socialization of the major means of production is the natural product of our own disillusion with collectivism—but the statement balances this with an equal caution concerning individual economic freedom. Its warning against certain other misconceptions reflects a maturity reached by few Americans prior to World War II and hence absent from earlier statements.

This is most clearly indicated in the thirteen "norms for guidance of Christians in their judgment of economic institutions and practices," an approach that is itself far less dogmatic than earlier pronouncements, especially in paragraphs 1, 5, 7, 10, 11, and 13. In these, factors not previously recognized clearly are taken into account, not the least of which the church's own responsibility for obscuring the ethical demands of the gospel (though there was no theme closer to the hearts of the earliest social gospel pioneers than the cry that the church was then preaching only a "half gospel") as well as the illusions of current ideologies, not the least of which is the assumption that there is a "Christian" economic or social order.

In conclusion, the 1954 Statement reaffirms the traditional Christian duty of

"sensitive concern for the welfare of all persons" but adds the characteristic mid-century note that this must be coupled with humility. A fresh and encouraging emphasis here is the insistence that the churches relate Christian vocation to economic life. The balanced conclusion that decisions and policies in these matters rest upon four requisites demonstrates a synthesis of Christian ethics and technical economics and what an earlier generation called "social engineering" that marks the 1954 Statement as a notable guide to this portion of a long travelled path.

II. A Change in Theological Mood

Robert T. Handy

A comparison of the Federal Council's 1932 revision of the "Social Ideals of the Churches" with the National Council's 1954 "Christian Principles and Assumptions for Economic Life" gives some indication how pervasive recent theological trends have become. In terms of their social and economic emphases, there is clearly much continuity between the two statements, but theologically there has been quite a shift. In tone and language, the documents reveal that they arise from contexts quite different.

The theological basis of the "Social Ideals" was not made very specific. It was said that "the supreme spiritual and ethical authority of Jesus is assumed." The ideals as presented were held to be "in essential harmony with prophetic and apostolic teachings," and it was believed that "their authority and inspiration is to be found in the way of life which Jesus taught and exemplified." It is not too extreme to say that on the whole the 1932 statement was predicated largely on social idealist premises of a nature more generally religious than explicitly Christian. The pronouncement said that "the Christian social ideal is one of a good life, abundant, progressive, and generously devoted to human welfare—a life lived 'under the eye and by the strength of God.'" That reference to the Eternal appeared early in the statement, and then he was not again mentioned until the concluding paragraphs.

"Christian Principles and Assumptions for Economic Life," on the contrary, has a necessarily brief but carefully worked out summary of the theological premises on which it rests. It has a section entitled "Fundamental Religious and Ethical Assumptions," which opens with the words, "God as we know him through Christ is the God of history, of nations and peoples, as well as of individual souls. It is his will that his Kingdom be realized among men and that his lordship be acknowledged over all principalities and powers, over every department of life, including economic institutions and practices."

As for an understanding of man, the earlier statement seemed to assume that men have the resources for realizing a vastly better social-economic order if only they will manifest a new dedication to the common good with courage and unselfishness. The recent declaration, however, elucidates its doctrine of man in quite a different way. It states: "All men are created in the image of God; and, though they are in history, sinful and rebellious as the slaves of their own self-will, God seeks to redeem them from their self-centeredness. Men experience freedom in the measure in which they are willing to become God's servants, and to allow God as revealed in Christ to become the center of their lives and the pattern of their living." It is asserted that the basis of a *Christian* belief in the dignity and possibilities of all persons lies in this teaching about man.

The theological emphasis is not only to be found in the section on "fundamental assumptions," for it pervades the entire pronouncement. The 1932 ideals viewed the Church largely as a social institution having as its objective the more abundant economic, cultural and spiritual life of humanity. The 1954 principles speak of the Church as Christ's body, and see the ministry to individuals as its primary role. The Federal Council's proclamation, in keeping with its social idealist premises, stressed the social dimension primarily. Its very attempts to magnify the place of the individual re-

vealed its preference for the social. For example, it said, "While the Christian ideal thus demands the new and better social order which is made possible by the techniques of modern science, it has always a message of hope and consolation for those who are troubled and perplexed: a gospel of joy and strength, and deliverance from temptation. The social gospel emphasizes and magnifies the individual and his personal needs." The 1954 document also strives to keep in close relationship the two foci, but reverses the emphasis: "The Christian churches have as a prime objective their ministry to individuals, and therefore have also a basic relationship to the society which they seek to serve." It is the social responsibility of the individual which is highlighted. There is much greater awareness of the role of the layman: "The Church must make its influence felt in economic life chiefly through the decisions of its laymen in their various occupations—as employers, as producers and consumers, and as citizens. The Christian is called to commit himself to God's purpose in every area of his life, and usually there is no more important area than his way of making a living."

The "Social Ideals" assumed that the major role of the church in economic affairs was prophetic. But "Principles and Assumptions" sees the task of the Church as both prophetic and *conserving*. Its responsibilities include not only the difficult tasks of criticism but also those of the conservation and promotion of such values as justice and freedom. In 1932 it was assumed that the best way to secure these values was by a prophetic witness; in 1954 it is seen that "in the present world situation there are real conflicts between such positive values as order and freedom, or order and justice, or justice and freedom. There can therefore be no completely "Christian" economic system, and Christians should seek such adjustments of economic practices and institutions as will serve the three positive values most fully. To do this, a balance between the prophetic and the conserving roles of the Church must always be sought.

The pervasiveness of the theological interest continues throughout the new statement. Its concluding section affirms that as the Christian confronts economic problems two attitudes should arise out of his faith in God's righteousness and love: "(1) love that takes the form of sensitive concern for the welfare of all persons and that seeks to raise the level of justice in economic institutions; (2) humility that comes when the Christian sees himself and his own social group under the judgment of God." The whole effort is clearly informed by the theological renaissance and the ecumenical revival. The shift from a socially-based idealism to a theologically-rooted realism is evident, but it has clearly not broken the continuity of prophetic Christian social witness received from an earlier day but has served to correct and balance it.

III. Critical Observations
Walter G. Muelder

There are some obvious merits in the statement which was adopted by the National Council of Churches in September, 1954. It reflects a many-sided conversation on the ethical problems of economic life; it is, consequently, not the product of one of the parties whose interests are at stake; it is, moreover, a kind of consensus of lay and clerical thinking; and it does deal with concrete issues and not simply with the broadest ethical generalizations. When one compares the statement with the older social creed of the churches one is impressed by its wider range of problems, its international perspective, its concern for the responsibility and contributions of the Church, and its awareness of power and organizational issues.

The statement is a compromise document and bears all the limitations of such a document. It lacks any sharp thrust and consequently reads more like "common sense" prophecy than like the urgency of divine judgment. Despite the fact that much truth is embodied in it, its tone is that of complacent preference for the American way, especially when compared with the ruthless injustice of totalitarian communism. As in-

dicated in the "Introduction" it seeks to maintain an appropriate balance between the conserving and the prophetic roles of the Church. The question is: from what perspective is the balance determined? Is this perspective itself that of Christian ethics? When justice and freedom are to be conserved and promoted how is it to be done? Is not prophecy in its classical form the conservation and promotion of justice?

In the "Introduction" and in the "Fundamental Religious and Ethical Assumptions" the idea of equality is conspicuously absent. Equality is also lacking in any of the general discussion of "Misconceptions" and does not appear until the second application of the ethical principles. Moreover, the prefatory argument for the applications also avoids the issue. This is most unsatisfactory from a doctrinal point of view.

The basic statement of religious and ethical assumptions stresses stewardship of one's own possessions, love and freedom; it does not explicitly deal with either justice or equality. The idea of love, of course, embraces justice and equality, and the idea of the dignity of man involves both also. Yet, no clear over-all theological analysis is made whereby the "conservative" and the "prophetic" balance may be arrived at. Balance is an ambiguous ethical or ecclesiological concept in any case. The problem of power does not enter into the argument. It is good to see the use of the concept of the Kingdom of God, but there is lacking any over-all socio-economic idea like the Responsible Society which has been fruitful in ecumenical discussions.

From the standpoint of Biblical theology it is not clear just why the particular Scripture verses were chosen. They are all good, of course, but they have no particular logical sequence. The paragraphs that precede them seem to be quite persuasive without them; their authority thus hangs in the balance between "orthodoxy" and "liberalism."

One has difficulties also with certain details in the effort at "balance" in dealing with "Certain Misconceptions." There is a studied avoidance of strongly positive statements on democratic socialism. It disposes too easily, therefore, of the Christian socialist movement in America. Moreover, it is simply not historically correct to dismiss churchmen's interest in socialization with the patronizing comment: "it was understandable that some Christians and others concerned about the welfare of the victims of the situation should regard every move toward increasing social control as an advance." When or where in the Church in America were there ever any considerable number who deserve the admonition "that uncritical recourse to the state to remedy every evil creates its own evils." The subsequent analysis fails to show that individual freedom is very dependent on community action and that social responsibility is a personal as well as a governmental obligation.

Among the applications two or three brief reflections may be added to the above: 1. there is lacking any thoroughgoing statement about the economic order as a whole; 2. there is no real concern with such burning issues as agricultural policy, or the relation of management and labor to each other or their relation to government; 3. there is an inadequate treatment of the ethical functions of collective bargaining and the growing efforts to undermine its democratic contributions to economic and social life; 4. there is need to expand the idea of responsibility of the U.S.A. to the world economic order along the lines developed by W. A. Brown, Jr., in *Christian Values and Economic Life;* and 5. there is no orderly progression of the applications in relation to the guiding principles, but a conspicuous desire to lead off with efficiency and productivity.

What of the role of the Church? From different portions of the statement we note that it "calls," apparently in teaching and preaching, that it criticizes in the light of social responsibility, that it should help turn principles into attitudes (love and humility), that it should develop the idea of vocation in its members, that it should handle rightly its own funds and employment policies, and that it should recognize the crucial role of technical factors. These are all good, but are they the full extension of the prophetic function of the Church? Let Bangkok, Lucknow and Evanston answer.

IV. From the Continent

Charles C. West

When one reads this statement against the background of experience in a foreign land, as this writer was asked to do, one reacts first with profound gratitude, not only for what the statement says, but for the healthy processes of discussion, moderation of extremes, and practical concern for human welfare, which one knows to lie behind it. Here is no ideal picture set forth for a Christian social order. The principles outlined, though general, have direct relevance to those immediate goals which men in position to make economic policy decisions can realize. They are a meeting ground, not simply a compromise, between men of vastly different insights and prejudices; part of the process in the United States by which the conflicting self-righteousnesses of opposing groups are brought captive to the will of God and the interest of the neighbor. The very dullness of the statement is in a way its glory! Let every criticism be understood in the framework of gratitude that this kind of leaven is at work in our society.

Against this background, let us examine the underlying theology of the statement. One is grateful for its Biblical references which point up the central issues. The way in which real human beings, body and soul, in their response to God, are made central is theologically sound. Yet one is left with both a Biblical and a theological question. The Bible is more concrete and more challenging when it touches on economic questions than is this statement. It says not only "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof"; it tells what happened to a certain man who built more barns to house his extra grain and said to himself, "Soul take thine ease." It not only commands us to "love thy neighbor"; it tells of the economic temptations which prevent us from doing so; of a rich young man who turned away from Jesus sorrowfully, and of His reprimand to a man who asked him to force fair division of an inheritance. In short the Bible not only sets forth principles to guide action. It analyzes concrete cases, as concrete today as they were then; cases which probe us and drive us to repentance. The National Council statement is too full of moral exhortation, to which labor, capital, and all the rest can say, "All these have we kept from our youth." Because of this it is likely to be at once less Biblical and less penetrating a tract for our time than, for example, the Presbyterian General Council's letter of a year ago.

This brings us to our theological question. The statement calls God in Christ a God of history and appeals to us to allow Christ to become the center of our lives. Yet it seems to miss the central idea to which these statements point—that *God* is the actor in history, including economic history, and we the responders. We come again to the familiar argument about the place of eschatology in social ethics. The problem is not to build the kind of an economic order on which God the King would look with favor, but to recognize what God is doing in the grace of Jesus Christ toward the day of His coming again, and to give ourselves to His work for us. Here also more historical prophetic analysis, rather than the statement of moral principles, belongs to the foundation of Christian thinking in economics. We do not make religious and ethical "assumptions." We confess a Lord who has remade us and will remake the world. We do not pass "Christian moral judgment" on "institutions and practices that divide men." We point out their fatal historical consequences as God has revealed His history to us, and the resources of grace by which they are overcome. The Christian mood is indicative, not imperative.

These may seem like different words for the same thing. In economics the decision may indeed be the same. But one must look at the United States from outside in order to discover how provincial our exclusive emphasis on planning and action, whether technological or moral, as the solution to all things, looks from there. Our programs for self-betterment impress the foreigner less than we might imagine. We reach common ground with him when we move away from the moral principle and program toward

the concrete and the objective in two directions: toward God's grace and historical work, and toward a clear picture of the economic forces at work in our world, hence toward the nature and limit of our responsibility amid them.

Following this line into economic analysis itself, would this statement not have done better to have attempted a concrete picture of certain economic problems in our American scene today, making clear the relation of various interests and power forces, their effect on the objectivity of the solutions they suggest, and the way in which human welfare and responsibility is involved? Instead of calling a spade a spade, this document adopts the much more tactful strategy of reminding a spade what a heart should look like. But does this reckon sufficiently with the self-justifying capacities of spades? The eighth point, for example, advocates wide ownership of private property to protect personal freedom, a theme which the nation's largest business concerns delight to trumpet across the land, while in practice the growth of monopoly and oligopoly among them continues apace. The point continues that "property and position which give men great power over the lives and economic situations of others, require constant moral scrutiny." How proud our powerful businessman can be that he fulfills this commandment, he who lives by the golden rule, belongs to Dr. Norman Vincent Peale's church, and attends the breakfasts of International Christian Leadership!

So it is with the twelfth point which deals with the relation of our economy to the needs of the world. With all honor to the Marshall Plan and Point Four for the imaginative generosity they demonstrated (shouldn't they have been mentioned in this point?), there is no place in our nation's foreign or domestic policy where small, almost normal petty sins of greed and timidity can reap so drastic a judgment as in the area of foreign trade. What Swiss smarting under the watch tariff would feel that the National Council had done its prophetic duty here with the general statement that "every national policy should be viewed with relation to its consequences for the lives of people everywhere"? The colossal dislocation of the world's economy which has raised our nation to the place where slight changes for us can make or break the rest of the non-communist world's well-being has given us a frightening historical responsibility and temptation. We as a nation are tending in the direction of forming the world's capitalist class, over against a proletarian world, especially in Asia, Africa, and South America. Though the economists, and Reinhold Niebuhr as well (cf. *Irony of American History*), assure us that this is a technical development not related to exploitation and imperialism, we dare not forget that the warnings about the rich man in the Bible are not communist propaganda. Our future and this world's may depend on our ability to discern the will of God for all this economic power more accurately, to understand our neighbor's mind and experience more thoroughly than any economic oligarchy has yet done in history. But, and this perhaps makes the theological point above concrete, this is not just a "difficult moral problem," as if by proper application of moral principles such as those in this report it might be solved. It is a historical crisis in which we are dealing with real foreign people who suspect nothing so much as the pretensions of our moralism; a crisis where, and this is our hope, both we and they are in the hands of a living and gracious God.

Report on a Conversation: Niebuhr and de Pury

ARNOLD W. HEARN

It is not untypical of American stupidity that, in the midst of the crucial votes on German rearmament in the French National Assembly, the American Dairy Association thought it the opportune time to send the omnipresent Typical American Girl on a trans-Atlantic visit of M. Mendès-France, bearing as gifts one quart of milk from each of the forty-eight states. There is possible, however, a more profound and creative type of Franco-American relations. One instance of such a valuable exchange is the subject of this article.

Just one year ago "The French Do Not Like Us," by Reinhold Niebuhr, appeared in this journal.[1] A distinguished Swiss Protestant who has devoted a twenty-year ministry in France, Pastor Roland de Pury, of Lyon, and author of *Journal From My Cell*[2] (which told of his experiences while imprisoned by the Nazis), addressed to Dr. Niebuhr a long and thoughtful reply, to which, in turn, Dr. Niebuhr made an appreciative rejoinder. None of this correspondence has been published. Limitations of space prevent its publication in full even now. Furthermore, many things have happened in the succeeding twelve months, and much of what was then written is no longer directly applicable. However, this conversation is so revealing of the spiritual chasm which separates France (and most of Europe) from America that a report on it is still in order. Of special interest to American Christians are M. de Pury's frank comments on the United States from the standpoint of a sensitive and informed Christian in France.

Niebuhr's article was concerned with the fact that the world-wide anti-American sentiment had in France "reached endemic proportions." He acknowledged that we bear large responsibility for this anti-Americanism, but went on to an analysis of what he deems the specifically *French* roots of the animus toward America. It is in criticism of this analysis—but within the context of a faith which bridges the chasm—that M. de Pury replies, saluting Dr. Niebuhr as one who is "the guarantee of an America still true to itself and the voice of a Protestantism which has remained the conscience of the nation." He writes "with fear and trembling" on behalf of "the French who ten years ago wept with thanksgiving and emotion for you and for the freedom which you brought with you—and who, today, wonder with fright how such a relationship can have so deeply altered."

Dr. Niebuhr had indicated some of the roots of French sentiment as "the resentments of a culturally rich but politically impotent European continent toward a powerful non-European nation, which . . . is suspected of gaining its power through technical skills, won at the expense of its cultural life." And he cited the case of a French poet who justifies neutralism by "consigning to 'barbarism' every human interest involved in the manipulation of power or the organization of social forces." De Pury pays tribute to the "promises in both American and French cultures," and yet states that "the French suspect a kind of technocracy and perceive a strange resemblance between what they may see of the Hollywoodian 'happy ending' and the Soviet Russian 'happy ending.' Beyond their present differences these two worlds seem to meet in a belief in an unquestioning kind of happiness, free from anguish or sin, whose dullness exactly foreshadows Hell. Whether it be 'liberty' or 'tyranny' which leads us to this sinless and aweless world does not matter. The main thing is to escape it." In his rejoinder Dr. Niebuhr expresses his agreement with most of the

1. *Christianity and Society*, Winter 1953-54. Since this is available to any who wish to consult it, references in the present article will be more truncated than would otherwise be the case.
2. Harpers, 1946.

"criticisms of the technocratic illusions in American culture," and states that his objection is "only to definitions which make any responsibility for civilization in economic, political, and military arrangements equivalent to 'barbarism.'"

However, the main thrust of Niebuhr's article was the elaboration of a somewhat different thesis—namely, that "the excessive degree of the French animus" is "due to her inclination to regard our life as symbolic of the weaknesses in her own life for which she feels herself most guilty." In replying to this thesis, de Pury acknowledges that, though not addressed to the French, the article constitutes for them "a serious call to repentance" which should be heeded. Yet he feels, on the one hand, that "if France acknowledged the whole of your charges without question, she might betray the best part of herself," and "on the other hand, the examples you give reveal on your part so comfortable an acceptance of American positions that they lose a great part of their efficacy."

One of Niebuhr's examples of the "transference of their sense of guilt to us by French intellectuals and the French left" lay in the fact that we are regarded as "the hateful collaborators of German 'militarism,'" partly as a result of the French "uneasy conscience for the degree of her acquiescence in the evil deeds of 'Nazism.'" Pastor de Pury rejects this idea altogether on the ground that the principal reason for refusing German rearmament, "namely, that it is a crime against a scarcely de-nazified Germany and a new step in the armaments race, is advanced only by the most genuine resistants to Nazism," and that the *un*repentant collaborators are nearly all supporters of American policy in Germany. Concerning E.D.C. (which, of course, still seemed a live option at the time he wrote), de Pury notes that it "appears to many to be a real clerical and reactionary conspiracy, a trump of American politics, and in no way a third power between two great ones."

Whether Niebuhr's suggestion contains a measure of truth or not, this is not actually so transparent a refutation as de Pury assumes, since it rests upon the distinction between "resistants" and "collaborators." The distinction is valid enough, but Dr. Niebuhr would seem to have had in mind a *national* sense of guilt, and surely having been a consistent resistant to Nazism is not incompatible with participation in the uneasy conscience of the nation with regard to collaborationism. Nevertheless, French conviction as represented by M. de Pury obviously considers itself as resting on entirely different grounds, and he expresses the hope that America will soon realize that France's obstinacy on the then still unresolved question of German rearmament "is not a reaction of weakness, but an act of authentic power and courage, to which we shall perhaps owe peace."

Another of Dr. Niebuhr's examples of this guilt transference concerned America as "the center of 'capitalism,'" and the uneasy conscience of French intellectuals over the peculiarly "static and decadent" character of capitalism in France. Here de Pury, while noting causes for special anxiety concerning American capitalism, is quite willing to accept Niebuhr's thesis, admitting, perhaps over-generously, that "the ruling middle and upper classes in France are the most reactionary in the world."

With regard to the war which was then raging in Indo-China, Niebuhr had said that the contention on the part of many French intellectuals and others that France was holding on "purely on the insistence of America" represented a transference to us of their sense of guilt for the specific sins of French imperialism. M. de Pury, in reply, holds no brief for French colonialism, but is disturbed because "these antiquated colonialist policies have suddenly become for you the only bulwark against communism in Asia. This is exactly what most disturbs the best Frenchmen about the U.S. You support the most conservative forces as if there were nothing to oppose communism but fascism, clericalism, and imperialism. As if we could fight against something bad with something worse! As if that were not the surest way of preparing the triumph of communism." In his rejoinder, Dr. Niebuhr reaffirms his original thesis, but adds that, had he been writing at that later date,

he would have apportioned the blame more equally, and he notes that Dulles' threats of "massive retaliation" had proven "how little America understands the issues in Asia and the ambiguous character of her leadership, consisting primarily in the possession of atomic weapons."

Dr. Niebuhr's original article had also devoted considerable attention to the Rosenberg case "as the high watermark of anti-Americanism in France." Here again was the transference of a sense of guilt: "The Rosenbergs were innocent not only because communist propaganda insisted on their innocence, but because Dreyfus was innocent. In like manner the anti-Semitism of both cases was established by analogy." It is to this point that M. de Pury devotes the greatest space and writes with the deepest feeling. He underscores "the astonishing unanimity in the French opposition to the execution," and protests that "the communist origin of the campaign cannot explain why so many journalists, theologians, lawyers, each time they cared to look into the case, were seized—not with a certainty of innocence—but with a serious doubt as to guilt." This doubt was shared by those who had least sympathy with communism and were most friendly to America. He points out that it was shared by the entire National Synod of the Reformed Church of France (noting wryly that "it is difficult to attain unanimity in a synod!"). But, he continues, in any event, *"where there remains the shadow of a doubt, one does not execute.* That is elementary for Frenchmen, still more for Christians. It has nothing to do with communism."

Pastor de Pury does not wish to overstress the Dreyfus parallel, but he does say: "You will admit that it is at least conceivable that your courts are as alienated by anti-communism as the French court was by anti-Semitism."

He contends, further, that France's highly emotional reaction was not an expression of anti-Americanism, but rather rested upon a deep attachment to the U.S.A. "When the Nazis killed, it was—in a way—normal. But on the part of the U.S. we expected something quite different. Regardless of one's estimate of these opinions, it is impossible to dismiss lightly the following poignant passage: "I quite well remember that night of June 19th. I was in a small meeting of worker couples, Catholic and Protestant. We could hardly talk about the prepared topic, so great was our anguish and so haunted our thoughts by what was happening. Very few of us slept that night. What weighed on us, along with the already crushing thought of two people, perhaps innocent, on the point of being put to death, was the even more terrible thought that friends were perhaps committing a crime, or at least proving themselves to be pitiless and inhuman—and *that* in spite of world-wide warnings and supplications. When we heard the next day that all was over, that America had done what the whole world, till the end, refused to believe her capable of doing (and what greater compliment could be offered her?), then what could be seen on faces was not hatred; no, but the unfathomable sadness of a baffled friendship mourning for a lost friend. And still worse for Protestants: the shame of thinking that they had not been able to make their brothers hear them. If the communists were mourning for the Rosenbergs, the French people were mourning for America. France's trust in America, which died that night, will not rise again before *doubt* has taken hold of the complacent American conscience in regard to this trial.

"If there is one thing which can give hope in France and make her worthy of your friendship (I say 'friendship' and not 'benevolent protection'), it is her marvelous reaction to the execution of a man and woman not surely innocent, but still less surely guilty. If you want to recover her friendship (not her complicity), you will have to acknowledge here, rather than at Dien Bien Phu, the fortitude and real calling of France."

In commenting on this, Dr. Niebuhr calls the execution of the Rosenbergs "a fantastic moral and political mistake," but he adds, on the basis of his own careful study of the case, "about the guilt of the Rosenbergs there can be no question. The fact that

French friends should not trust the competence of this judgment and should challenge it at long range is very revealing about the depth of mistrust between the nations."

Another topic of this conversation was, inevitably, Senator McCarthy. (Today's witty observation that censure has transformed McCarthyism into a "wasm" may be premature—not so acute as merely cute. The "ism" is more pervasive than its namesake.) Niebuhr had granted that "McCarthyism seems to justify every false preconception of America held by Europeans," but insisted that the view that the Senator's antics are the first chapter in fascism rests in part upon false analogies drawn from the history of Europe. "Our democratic health is more robust than Europe believes." M. de Pury hopes this estimate is correct, and yet he fears that it takes "the number one agent in behalf of communism" a little lightly. "He is but an antic fool, we agree. But he is a fool who has a section of public opinion behind him and who is doing great harm. If you want us not to pay attention to him, it would be well if he lost his power and if Cardinal Spellman did not come to us praising God for his investigations." In this connection, and without holding any brief for atomic scientists, Pastor de Pury cites the case of Dr. Oppenheimer, who "because of his scruples toward the production of the H-bomb was led in front of an investigating committee at the very time dozens of Japanese fishermen had been maimed for life by the testing of that bomb. The antics of Senator McCarthy are a kind of contagious rabies." Niebuhr responds: "We must not deny that McCarthyism is a very grievous disease. The question is whether it is a mortal one. We do not think so. I may be aggravating the tension with the suggestion that there is probably a little more chance of de Gaulle being victorious in France than of McCarthy gaining dominance in America."

Dr. Niebuhr had concluded his original article by granting that "we have much to learn and many faults to correct from the study of anti-American sentiment." But in the case of the special virulence of French anti-Americanism, "the primary problem is to bear with patience an animus which is derived for the most part from French weaknesses rather than our own."

From the standpoint of de Pury, "there is in the anti-American animus in France a part of French weakness, but I believe there is a greater part of French strength. The French weaknesses are certainly more numerous and more serious still than those you mention. . . . Yet I do not think they are the disguised accusers of your virtues. They are rather the disguised accomplices of your most serious weaknesses. In order to re-establish the conditions of a dialogue and of a Franco-American friendship, we—Americans and Frenchmen—ought to do more than bear patiently each other's weaknesses, feeling ourselves virtuous. We ought to repent together of our own weaknesses, in a humble and wise discernment of the other's strengths. France and the U.S.A. can help each other greatly; they might cure each other of many faults, and especially of the fear of communism, if they would truly listen to each other in complete freedom and sympathy. May we hope that the Church at least, in both our countries, will endeavor to make this mutual consideration possible."

And Niebuhr concludes by expressing doubt whether there has been enough criticism of that which is most vulnerable in American policy. "We say we believe in peaceful coexistence. But our reactions to Churchill's proposals prove that we do not know the implications of such a policy. Our opposition to the admission of China to the United Nations is emotional, frightening, and immature. I could wish that our fancied vices would not be enlarged upon so unjustly, in order that our allies might make a better case against the real dangers of our political immaturity."

It is not the purpose of this article to deal critically with the material presented, or to make any effort to bring it up to date. We Americans may feel, and perhaps quite rightly, that M. de Pury's limited perspective distorts much of what he sees when he looks at America. And yet we may be grateful to him for telling us plainly how we do

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Christian Faith and Political Decision

Robert McAfee Brown

What I shall attempt to do in the following comments is to indicate how certain theological dimensions of the Christian faith have bearing upon the framework within which the Christian makes his social and political choices. I do not for a moment suggest that there is a simple deductive ethic easily derivable from theological presuppositions (e.g., that the Christian doctrine of man indicates the necessity of voting Democratic at all times and in all places).

At the same time, it is important for Christians to make their political commitments in *as close relationship* to their faith as is possible. To deny this seems to me to be saying in effect that theology is irrelevant to "life," a diverting pastime for theologians, but of no real concern to the "practical man." Furthermore, it is important for the Christian to avoid the temptation to which Becket almost succumbed in *Murder in the Cathedral,* namely, "the greatest treason, to do the right thing for the wrong reason." To be acting for what we believe, as Christians, to be the right reasons, is perhaps as important as that we act at all, even though this conviction may not preclude us from making common cause politically with individuals and groups who do not share our theological affirmations.

My thesis, then, is that theological conviction pushes us into the arena of political concern and can offer us insight into the implementation of that concern. I shall now try to illustrate this thesis with reference to certain segments of Christian theology.

1. Take, for example, the Christian doctrine of *creation,* or more explicitly the doctrine of the goodness of creation. We affirm by this that we are living in God's world, that he has an intention for his world, and that we have been placed here by him for the doing of his will in this world which is his, here and now, right where we are. And since the way in which things are done in this world, and the place where the decisions are made which affects people's lives and destinies, is the realm of politics, the Christian is thus forced into political activity if he really takes the doctrine of creation seriously. The sin of political indifference is a denial of the doctrine of creation.

I realize that a statement about the necessity of involvement is a truism to the readers of this journal, few of whom would attempt to take refuge behind the specious claim that politics is so messy that the Christian ought not to get his hands dirty meddling with it. All therefore that needs to be underlined at the moment is the reminder that our concern with social policy is rooted not chiefly in our belief that a right policy decision will bring in the Kingdom of God, or will store up merit for us in heaven, but rather in our belief (sometimes admittedly a little bewildered) that this is God's world, and that we have been created by him and placed here by him here and now, and must seek to implement his will here and now.

This conviction is furthermore a theological counterbalance to the kind of irresponsible other worldliness which sometimes infects vigorous Protestant sects and tired Protestant churches. We cannot slough off responsibility for this world. Why not? Because it is something God was concerned enough to create, with which he has identified himself, and in which he has participated.

2. These last words immediately suggest a second doctrinal area which is all bound up with the social life of the Christian. I refer, of course, to the doctrine of the *Incarnation.* Here we are making the claim that God is not an absentee God, unconcerned about the plight of men on earth, but that on the contrary he is so radically concerned with the destiny of men on earth that he has become man himself, subjected himself to the frustrating limitations of our human lot, and participated to the hilt in our situation. This is italicized testimony to the significance of our social life, of God's concern for it, and of the extent to which he was willing to go, in order that it might

be drastically changed. There are, of course, other facets in the doctrine of the Incarnation, but for the moment let it emphasize the way in which God is involved with men, right where they are. It means that the significance of our life is found not only in some far-off heaven, or in an eternity which negates the importance of time. It is here and now, in dateable events, in specific happenings. *Here* is where God has manifested his concern. Here, too, is where we must manifest our concern.

3. The implications of the doctrine of *man* are particularly obvious. Clearly the affirmation that man is created in the image of God means that we must treat each man as supremely important—and this means man in his totality and not just a part of him. If he is hungry, that is both a religious and political concern, and we are not allowed by our Biblical faith to set up a false dualism which affirms that we are concerned only about his soul. The whole Biblical emphasis on the body, on man as an indissoluable unity (and notice that this is another way of stating the doctrine of the goodness of creation) means that *every* aspect of man's life is our concern. Thus if he is hungry, he must be fed, and this will involve more than an organization of people to send CARE packages or work in Quaker work camps. It will also involve the organization of economic life and political life. *All* of human life is a concern to us because we believe that God has stamped his image on that life.

But at the same time, as we all know, this is not the whole story on man, and there are equally important social ramifications of the claim that man is a sinner. The fact that our life is corrupted on every level has at least a two-fold political implication: it means that we can trust no one with unlimited power, since that power will be abused in the interests of those who hold the power, and it also means that we must organize effective ways politically of controlling the sources of power. What I am saying can be summed up in a very helpful statement by Dr. Niebuhr, to the effect that "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." Because we are capable of a certain degree of disinterestedness, it is possible for us to live together in a tolerable kind of harmony; but because we also use the claims of disinterestedness as a cloak for our own special interests, either overtly or covertly, we must necessarily be restrained from getting away with it. And the democratic process, however imperfectly, takes account of both of these contingencies. (Dr. Bennett, in his contribution to the Harper volume, *Goals of Economic Life,* has developed this kind of point with great clarity.)

4. Another important area of Christian doctrine impinges upon our social decisions as Christians. This is the doctrine so dear to the heart, and so far from the understanding, of every Protestant, the doctrine of *justification by faith,* or to put it in a slightly wider context, the doctrine of redemption. In briefest scope, we are here being told that we are brought into right relationship with God, redeemed or justified, not by what we have done, but by what God has done, and that we have not earned this or deserved this, but that it is his sheer gift. All we have to do is receive it. The Christian sees this fact writ large in the cross of Christ, which is God's way of dealing with our sin, taking it into himself and conquering it by his own suffering love. (Thus the area I am trying to describe could also be subsumed under the doctrine of the atonement, or the doctrine of grace, as descriptive of God's active outgoing love for the loveless and the unworthy.)

What is the relevance of this whole area of Christian faith to the decisions we must make in politics? This is the most difficult to make tangible, and yet probably the most important. Negatively, we are told that we will fail to do as much as we should, and it is always well to be aware of this fact. We will not be "justified" by what we do. The best we can achieve will not be enough in God's eyes. To see this fact alone would be to be saved from considerable premature disillusionment. But positively, we are also told that the basically important thing is not so much what we do as what God does, and our response to that. The center

of attention is shifted from a frantic attempt to earn God's love or man's plaudits, to a kind of response-ethic in which the basic motivation is not striving but gratitude. Because God loves us in spite of our evil, because God saves us in spite of our unworthiness, because Christ dies for us while we are yet sinners—for these reasons we must seek to let that same love be operative through us, as we seek to express it through the struggle for justice.

Similarly, we must realize that what we do may not be the finally determinative thing at all. What we do may, to be sure, occasionally be a way through which God's will is done. What we do may also, however, frustrate God's will, even when we are most confident that it is God's will. In the last analysis, all we can do is offer our poor best, realizing that it will not be enough, but confident that God can use it in ways which are most consonant with his purposes. This is not a counsel of despair; it is on the contrary a counsel of good cheer, for it relieves us of the intolerable burden of claiming that we have final wisdom, or can save the world with one more gimmick, or, more importantly, that what we are about to do politically is totally right and good. It releases us from these burdens and frustrations to work and strive and fight as significantly as we can, and not to be too importantly self-righteous about it.

5. Another theological area can be dealt with in briefer fashion. This is the doctrine of the *sovereignty of God,* on the face of it the most "theological" of the doctrines I have mentioned, but actually as politically relevant as any of them. It means, simply, that only God is God; that is, it is only to God Himself that unqualified and total allegiance can be given. Now it is always the temptation in political life to give unqualified allegiance to something less than God, such as the Democratic party or Senator McCarthy—to affirm that such institutions or persons are beyond criticism, and must be uncritically supported at every juncture and every crisis. This is what the Bible calls idolatry, and it is roundly condemned. The worship of false gods is attacked again and again by the prophets, and too much of our political life is a perpetuation of this sin. We are guarded, thus, by affirming the sovereignty of God, from affirming the final sovereignty of anything else, from giving a kind of allegiance to political institutions which they are simply not entitled to have. This means that we can have a critical loyalty to the Democratic party, for example, but we will on occasion differ with it or its spokesmen, and endeavor to change it from within, rather than simply following its lead unquestioningly. Where this is not the rule, false absolutisms and totalitarian systems have a chance to spring up in a way that is only too distressingly apparent in the history of the last twenty-five years. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" is basic political wisdom.

6. Finally, the whole dimension of *worship and the sacraments* has a more direct bearing on our political life and activity than is usually realized. I am more and more impressed, for example, with the social and political significance, if you will, of the sacrament of holy communion. For one thing, this is the strongest possible expression of our communal life as a people of God, and a dramatic reminder that life is life lived under God. The basis of true community is the basis of absolute equality before the Lord's table—the equality of unworthiness, the equality of all men on an absolutely equal footing of need, whether American or Asiatic, black or white, rich or poor, even, I may add, Republican or Democrat.

But more than just this, is the sense in which the sacrament reminds us of the sanctification of the earthy. The vehicles by which our Lord was chosen to represent himself to us are the commonplace elements of bread and wine. *These* are sacramental, rather than ethereal music, or golden-voiced preachers, or mystic flights away from reality. The highest point of worship is thus the extremely mundane act of eating and drinking. The commonplace is holy. The extension of this to the betterment of the commonplace in life, through our civic, political and other organizations is, I hope, obvious. Needless to say, there are many

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REVIEWS

Toward Better State Government

Adventures in Politics, Richard L. Neuberger; Oxford University Press, New York; 1954; 210 pp., $3.50.

This book takes on even more interest since the outcome of the midterm elections which skyrocketed its author to national prominence. The name Neuberger will not be quickly forgotten since so many waited to hear whether he or his Republican opponent, Guy Cordon, would hold the narrow margin of victory in the Oregon senatorial race with control of that august body hanging ungracefully in the balance.

If this book is an earnest of what is to come, we may predict that Oregon will continue to bask in the national limelight by virtue of its two outspoken and somewhat maverick senators. But a caution must be sounded about taking this book as an earnest. Its author is not writing a treatise on government nor a partisan platform—rather he writes a popular autobiographical story of "adventures in politics," as a state representative and state senator. This is a homey, sometimes rambling book, replete with repetition, but nonetheless basically interesting and well worth reading. It is probably the collection and expansion of some of the author's best speeches. And some important issues are there.

The issues, like the author's adventures until the time of this book, focus on state government. Mr. Neuberger's main point is that most of our state governments are operating with "stone age" tools. He documents his case carefully with a store of information about state governments far beyond the boundaries of his own state. He avidly marks the anachronisms for removal with a view to strengthening state governments. His argument plus the fact that he is generally regarded a "New Deal-Fair Deal" Democrat give the lie to much of the propaganda we hear under the banner of "states' rights." Parenthetically, one might wonder if we will continue to hear so much now that we have an overwhelming majority of state governorships occupied by Democrats.

The four major obstacles to good state government which Neuberger points up are: 1. the fact that twenty-one of our states are effectively one-party states; 2. the inadequate salaries paid to state office holders, plus the exorbitant cost of campaigns, with the consequent power of influence of wealthy lobby groups; 3. the inequities in representation, with rural districts holding 300 times the power of representation in some states; and 4. elephantine state constitutions, which operate as veritable strait-jackets on many legislatures—except when they are "honored only in the breach" (an expression repeated so often the reader may begin to wish Mr. Neuberger had never heard it).

Some minor obstacles, his treatment of which lacks the freshness of his treatment of the above obstacles, are the lack of young people in government, the lack of women (the reader will learn and be reminded many times that Mrs. Neuberger, as a state representative, got a state law forbidding the sale of colored margarine repealed after it had been on the books for 37 years by staging a demonstration, before the full Agricultural committee, of what the housewife has to go through to hand-color margarine), and the lack of "good people" in government.

The two major weaknesses in Neuberger's implied theory of government which this reviewer discerns are: 1. his apparent individualistic or "independent" rather than party conception of government (cf. Schattschneider, *Party Government*); and 2. his lack of a healthy view of the give-and-take of politics—of compromise. For Neuberger, principle is almost too much a matter of principle.

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dimensions of the Lord's Supper which remain untouched by these few sentences, but I see no way of ducking the fact that to do this in remembrance of Him, forces us to do many other things in remembrance of, and out of concern for, His children.

Realistic Politics

The Limits of Foreign Policy, by Charles Burton Marshall; Holt, New York; 1954; 128 pages; $3.00.

Call to Greatness, by Adlai Stevenson; Harper, New York; 1954; 110 pages; $2.25.

Recently *Time* magazine took a characteristic pot shot at four recent books on U.S. foreign policy. The two slim volumes reviewed here, together with Kennan's *Realities of American Foreign Policy* and F. S. C. Northrop's *European Union and United States Foreign Policy,* are very "bad," said *Time* (Nov. 1), because of their "overriding fear . . . that the U.S. will become too impressed with its 'limitations' and forget its opportunities." *Time's* "reviewers" distorted what Stevenson, Kennan and Marshall (I haven't read Northrop) had to say for what appears to be narrow partisan reasons, and their uncritical critique suggests that Mr. Luce's strange dream of an "American century" is still alive, China and Indo-China notwithstanding.

This reviewer likes Marshall and Stevenson for the very reasons that *Time* doesn't. Both writers are thoroughly realistic about the limitations and possibilities of man, world politics and history itself. But unlike *Time* they disavow any new "manifest destiny" for America, preferring instead to affirm the mutual dependence of nations and to accept for America a burden of responsibility commensurate with her power. This burden must be borne with humility and in partnership with other nations of the free world.

Mr. Marshall, a member of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff from 1950 through 1953, makes a brilliant contribution to the understanding of world politics by analyzing the severe limits within which foreign policy operates. U.S. policy is "necessarily in large part a response to situations . . . beyond our Government's control." The failure of the public and the policy makers to recognize the limits imposed by human nature and the conflicting interests of world politics leads to excessive expectations which end in despair and to grandiose "solutions" which end in disaster. "A failure of events to confirm expectations shows something wrong about the expectations."

Our dangerous illusion that "Americans can do anything" has been nourished by a "consciousness of an extraordinarily successful past," an "excessive faith in legislation," and a "faith in engineering" and hard work. A public imbued with this illusion has often sought to force the U.S. Congress to accept sweeping panaceas for world peace which ignored the basic problem of power—the Kellogg-Briand Pact to "outlaw war," international agencies of conciliation and arbitration, embargoes, and a referendum by which the public would decide whether the country should go to war or not. "The elaborate machinery of conciliation has proved useful and relevant in not one single instance," says Marshall. The author's discussion on the UN's "glass-house diplomacy" should be pondered by all who overestimate the role of international machinery for dealing with power conflicts. "Popular opinion is not much, if any, value in helping in the discovery of answers to (foreign policy) problems, (but it does set) bounds to the area of maneuver available to those charged with responsibility."

Mr. Marshall is a philosopher-statesman. He writes with candor, clarity and color. His pointed and freshly-worded definitions of world politics, foreign policy, government, power, authority and consent are helpfully illustrated by recent events in U.S. diplomacy. His brilliant insights are further illuminated by purple patches from Saint Paul, Hamilton, Keats, James Thurber, archy the philosophic roach and a score of other immortals.

Adlai Stevenson's *Call to Greatness* is a great book on all counts. Mr. Stevenson has sat at the feet of respected scholars and experts and has distilled what he has learned from them into eloquent and moving prose. His debt to men like Reinhold Niebuhr, George Kennan, Charles B. Marshall and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., is considerable, but not always acknowledged. His unacknowledged dependence on Marshall's *Limits of Foreign Policy* at many points is embarrassing.

If there is available a more brilliantly-

written, sensitive, profound and balanced summary of America's international responsibility than *Call to Greatness* this reviewer has not heard about it. Many authors say some of the right things and some authors say many of the right things, but Mr. Stevenson says *all* the right things and says them well. This is a tribute not only to his teachability and catholic sympathies, but to his rare gift of getting to the heart of the matter.

Mr. Stevenson understands the urgency of our times ("We are all standing shoulder to shoulder—with a hydrogen bomb ticking in our pockets."), but everything he says is tempered by a profound, and I believe Christian, understanding of history which vetoes both excessive expectation and despair. He accepts "America's burden . . . to organize and lead that portion of the world which adheres to the principle of consent" with humility and a sense of responsibility. Conscious of "the limits of our wisdom" he places ultimate "faith in a power greater than ours, our enemies' or any man's."

He warns against the "illusion of American omnipotence" and says "we live in a time of perpetual peril, and the end is not in sight." "Many of the really hard problems in international relations may never be 'solved' at all. . . . Impatience, arrogance and our faith in quick solutions (are) fundamentally . . . unchristian (because they ignore) the pervasiveness of evil."

Stevenson and Marshall stand with Kennan and Niebuhr in condemning the traditional American moralistic and legalistic approach to world politics which in the long week-end between two World Wars led to an unneutral "neutrality" and today leads to self-righteous intervention. These men stand in judgment against Mr. Knowland's suggested ultimatum to Red China, Mr. Dulles' "liberation policy," as well as Mr. Luce's "American century."

ERNEST W. LEFEVER

(continued from page 23)

look from where he stands. And his distortions at least have the merit of reminding us that we too are finite, and are most surely wrong if we claim for *our* limited perspective the command of an infinite vista. It is precisely these limitations, and their particularly tragic character in the present hour, which make communication with those who see differently so necessary. The Church of Jesus Christ—when it *is* the Church—is the place where such conversation can take place, conversation in the weak and distorted words of men, but words in which may be discerned the accents of a prophetic Word that speaks to the anguish of the entire world.

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. . . ET CETERA . . .

As we go to press . . . the President has requested and received support from Congress for the Administration's policy of defending Formosa and the Pescadores, if necessary, and assisting in the redeployment of Nationalist Chinese troops for defense of the lesser islands. Chou En-lai has rejected the United Nations' invitation to participate in debate seeking a cease-fire, and there has been an air clash between U.S. and Red Chinese planes. While tension continued to mount over the troubled waters of the Formosa Straits, in France the government of Pierre Mendès-France fell. Editorial comment on these and subsequent events will be forthcoming in the Spring issue of C & S.

* * *

There is something ironically appropriate . . . in the fact that it is in the midst of such days as these that we may extend birthday greetings to our sister publication, the bi-weekly journal of Christian opinion, *Christianity and Crisis,* on the occasion of its fifteenth anniversary. *Christianity and Crisis,* with which we share an office suite and a senior editor, was born in 1940 to speak to the particular crisis of that era. As recently as October 18, 1954, the editors wrote: "We do not promise or threaten to go on forever." Be that as it may, the time for its demise is not yet.

* * *

The plight of the "Joe Must Go" leaders . . . was forcibly brought to the attention of Christian Action members by Edward Nestigen in the monthly *Newsletter,* January, 1955. Former Sauk County (Wisconsin) District Attorney Harlan Kelley, smarting from a landslide defeat in his recent bid for re-election on a straight "McCarthy support" platform, brought suit against the Joe Must Go club, charging that its activities violated Wisconsin law. The Circuit Court has found the club guilty and assessed fines totalling $4,200. This decision against a non-partisan group of Wisconsin citizens, who made a valiant effort and came near succeeding in having Joseph McCarthy recalled from his senatorial post, rests on an extremely shaky legal foundation, and an appeal is now in process. The officers of the Joe Must Go club, who are all persons of modest means, are at present endeavoring to bear the very considerable expense of what may prove to be an extended series of lawsuits. Donations are urgently needed. They should be sent to: Mr. John Gilroy, 166 North Prospect Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin. They will be used *only* for legal defense and should be marked for "Joe Must Go Defense." If not fully used, contributions in excess of five dollars will be returned *pro rata.* Unused portions of donations under five dollars will be turned over to United Givers. (For a short analysis of the legal aspects of the case, see the monthly *Newsletter of Christian Action,* January, 1955.)

* * *

The last issue . . . of C & S you received was the special issue containing a section entitled: "Practical Guides for 'Christian Action'." The "Practical Guides" portion has now been reprinted in pamphlet form and is available on request—in quantities if you can use them. This booklet has a dual purpose: first, to provide suggestions for members of Christian Action by relating some of the experiences of other members and chapters, and second, to introduce other people to Christian Action, its purposes, organization, and activities. The address is: Christian Action, 537 West 121st Street, New York 27, New York.

* * *

And what about us? . . . Does *Christianity and Society* live up to your expectations? Are our editorials, articles, and reviews discussing the events, covering the subjects, representing the authors, and dealing with the books that are of concern to you and doing it in a manner that you find appealing and helpful? Your editors wish to serve Christian Action effectively. We would like to hear from you. Let us know what we are doing wrongly (we can take it). And, on

occasion, you might let us know what we do that is right (we'd love it!).

* * *

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE, EAST HARLEM PARISH, AND REINHOLD NIEBUHR . . . were the strange bedfellows who found themselves together under the heading: "Trends in U.S. Protestantism" in a most significant trio of articles in the January 13th issue of *The Reporter*. The article on the East Harlem Protestant Parish was by William Harlan Hale, and William Miller, whose name is familiar to members of Christian Action, contributed "The Irony of Reinhold Niebuhr" and "Some Negative Thinking About Norman Vincent Peale." Dr. John C. Bennett has referred to the latter two as "an illuminating study in comparative religion." These are really too good to miss. If you have not read them, do so while waiting for your next issue of C & S.

* * *

THE DEFENSE OF SEGREGATED METHODISM . . . by the Bishops of the Southeastern Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church was the subject of a U.P. dispatch appearing in *The New York Times* (February 4). It seems the Bishops think that racial segregation in Methodism "protects the rights and privileges of minorities," and they, furthermore, doubt that the world's woes are likely to be healed "by readjustment of human institutions and the enactment of laws with an element of compulsion about them." All right, gentlemen, now let's talk about prohibition.

NEW GROUND WAS BROKEN . . . for Christian Action by the New York Chapter in its retreat on "Art, Religion, and Society" last December. Included were a performance of Andre Obey's play, "Noah," by the professional Chapel Players of the Broadway Tabernacle Church, a panel discussion at the Museum of Natural Art, with several distinguished artists as participants, and an effort by those in attendance to participate creatively in a confrontation between Christian faith and the worlds of theater and art. Not unrelated to this concern is an article, slated to appear in an early issue of C & S, on motion pictures.

* * *

ALSO WATCH THIS JOURNAL . . . for a forthcoming piece on the importance of the Fifth Amendment in American life—a very knotty problem concerning which many of us could do with some competent illumination.

* * *

SAVE THE DATES... . . of June 9-11 for the National Conference of Christian Action, which will probably be held in the vicinity of Washington, D.C. More on this later.

* * *

REPRINTS . . . of two provocative articles from past issues of C & S are still available: J. Coert Rylaarsdam, "The Doctrine of the Church and the Problem of Culture" (Autumn, 1953) and Will Herberg, "Faith, History, and Self-Understanding" (Spring, 1954). These may be ordered at a cost of 3¢ each from Christian Action, 537 West 121st Street, New York City 27.

A. W. H.